MUTINY

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A monthly militant newsletter for political and social analysis from an anarcho-communist perspective.
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Defiant Invasion Day Kicks off the Year

Despite police and government pressure, over 10,000 people rallied to call for the end of Black deaths in custody and to an end to Indigenous oppression.

Minutes after 9am, with police constables shouting feebly over megaphones for protesters to turn away from the Domain, the police conceded that Invasion Day in Sydney would go ahead. Despite weeks of threatening fines and imprisonment for anyone attending the rally in the media and press conferences, as soon as a sizable crowd walked into the domain at 9am the police became painfully aware they were unable to stop more than 10,000 people from flooding the Domain.

The mass mobilisations for Black Lives Matter in the United States have given inspiration for a renewed wave of energy for the Indiginous rights movement in Australia. Speakers on the day called for the end of Aboriginal deaths in custody, justice for the families of those killed, for revolution and the abolition of the police, cutting against reformist attempts to co-opt the movement by arguing Indigenous oppression will disappear through constitutional recognition or a parliament puppeteered by the ruling class.

Growing support of these radical calls for liberation show that 2021 will not be a year of rest while the ruling class attempts to make workers pay for the economic crisis. The success of this rally demonstrates that the police's threat to fine and shut down the protest the moment it reached 500 people was essentially hollow.

The purpose of the police and the government's rhetoric in the lead up to Invasion Day was to force concessions from the organisers and to reduce attendance, which only partially worked. In order to build this movement further we will have to continue publicly arguing for the necessity of protest during this crisis, despite the ruling class pushing that we should lay powerless to their management of the health and economic crisis, with the threat of police violence to accompany it. Studies show that COVID primarily spreads in enclosed indoor spaces, and that mass rallies in the US did not spread COVID - so everyone who can should show up to keep each other safe.

A final reflection. Given the militancy and size of the crowd, and the willingness of the police to concede, a march would have likely been possible. That being said, the reasons for why the organisers decided not to march were understandable (the tangible threat of police violence on Indiginous families). The lesson we should draw from this isn't that we shouldn't march or that conceding to police will keep us safe, but that we need to be prepared to protect vulnerable people in our community. Conceding to the police falls into the mistaken logic that we can protect ourselves from the police by following their rules.

Police will always seek opportunities to depress movements challenging their and the ruling class' power, using violence or intimidation. We can only rely on each other to keep us safe - as long as we demand First Nation's justice, we will have to fight. Let's take inspiration from Invasion Day's spirit of struggle and defiance for the year to come!

No Cops, No Corporate Mardi Gras

Pride in Protest is re-invigoriting the spirit of queer militarism and arguing that the struggle for queer and racial justice will be won united, by reclaiming Mardi Gras for the community.

The unjust killing of George Floyd has led to a worldwide explosion in struggles for racial justice. This flashpoint likewise reinvigorated the demands of the Stop Black Deaths in Custody movement in Australia, with mass mobilisations taking place across the continent in July 2020. Recognising that First Nations people and the queer community have a common struggle, Pride in Protest - a radical Queer-liberation collective - has campaigned for the Mardi Gras Parade to kick out the police and corrective services and to use the parade to speak up for black lives. Their campaigning led to an unprecedented 44% vote by Mardi Gras members to bar the cops and corrective services from marching. It's highly likely that they will succeed in winning this demand this year.

With COVID-19 as cover, the Mardi Gras Board has chosen to move this year's parade from its traditional home on Oxford Street to a paid ticketed event at the SCG to appease their commercial sponsors. Pride in Protest has seized on the Mardi Gras Board's abandonment of the community space to hold the real Mardi Gras March, a political, community march without police, corrective services, or corporations.

Pride in Protest's demands represent this push to show that racism is a queer issue, and that no queer person can be liberated until we join the struggle against racism. The community march will be in the radical spirit of the 1978 rally, itself being a march to commemorate the 1968 Stonewall protests in New York in 1969. The 1978 rally was violently broken up by the police, with the cops attempting to break the protesters' morale through arrests and assaults. Violent police response to Queer rights struggles continues to this day. It was only October 2020 where a rally to "Protect Trans Kids, Kill Latham's Bills" was violently broken up by police, supposedly for public health, despite numerous COVID-19 protection measures, and no evidence of the virus spreading from any protest across the globe.

How can we be a society that embraces liberation if we have bills that threaten trans students and teachers, or trans inclusive education and health care? Nor can we claim to be a society that embraces LGBTIQA+ people if Queer refugees fleeing the wars western colonial powers started, are deported back home and face persecution, torture, and death? Can Aboriginal people really be equal if they're over-policed and over-incarcerated? Neither can we turn a blind eye to the persecution of sex wokers across this country or the irrational fear of drug use that harms Black, Brown, and Queer lives disproportionally.

The barriers that the Mardi Gras board and their corporate and state government allies have erected to prevent the demands of queer liberation demonstrates how both the government and the capitalist class are barriers to human liberation - their very power depends on working people being divided and oppressed, and our power depends on being united. Pride in Protest demands these reforms not only to make working people's lives better and to make racism a queer issue, but to reinvigorate the militant queer liberation movement that can plant the seed for a radical transformation in social and political affairs.

Mardi Gras Demands

1. #KillTheBill.

End transphobic scapegoating and the so-called religious freedoms bills and education amendments bill. Job security, and universal and trans inclusive education and health care should be a right.

2. #NoPrideInDetention.

End mandatory detention, and forced deportations in favour of permanent resettlement with the right to jobs, health, and housing. Say no to sexuality testing of queer refugees, and end the wars that create refugees.

3. #BlackLivesMatter.

Over 437 Aboriginal people have been murdered by the state since 1991. End Black deaths in custody, end the over-policing of Black communities, and abolish the police and correctional services.

4.#DecrimSexWork

#LegaliseAllDrugsNow

Fully decriminalise sex work in every state and territory, with sex workers at the centre of law reform and policy change. Decriminalise and legalise drug use and support drug law reform that halts the war on drug users.

When we stand together, we win - the rally is on Saturday, March 6, 2021 at 2 PM in Taylor Square.

Green Jobs Now! No Gas-Led Recovery

Scomo's proposed 'Gas-Led' recovery from the economic crisis related to COVID-19 will do nothing for workers and everything for mining bosses - we need green jobs and Indiginous sovereignty now!

The climate crisis is a class issue. The LNP is pushing Scomo's "gas-led recovery" as the solution to the COVID crisis. This means millions of dollars will be spent on fast-tracking and funding the exploration of new Coal Seam Gas (CSG) fracking sites across Australia, the extraction of Liquid Natural Gas (LNG), and the development of infrastructure such as pipelines and railways to export LNG overseas. It's a blatant example of how the government is using COVID as cover to push the burdens of the economic recession onto the working class. In the context of increasing unemployment, cuts to wages, unemployment benefits, and underfunded public services, governments and big business are continuing to put profits over the climate at the expense of First Nations sovereignty and the livelihoods of ordinary people.

This 'recovery' plan follows a pattern of workers rights being eroded by successive Australian governments, intensifying with the Accords in the 1980s. Of course, the exploitation of workers and the environment goes hand in hand, as capitalism will always prioritise profits over working people and the land, air, and water we depend on. This plan is exactly the same, and makes the contradictions inherent to capitalist development clear; the very path proposed out of a crisis will only plunge us deeper into environmental disaster.

This "gas-led recovery" will be catastrophic for First Nations communities whose land and water will be desecrated by the expansion of mining and its supporting infrastructure. It is the clearest continuation of modern colonial dispossession. Indigenous people are already denied access to cultural and sacred sites as land is enclosed and sealed off by private companies before development even begins. Bureaucratic avenues of dispute are designed to fail, and non-violent attempts to forcefully blockade or disrupt mining activity are met with police brutality.

The benefits of these fast tracked projects will flow directly upwards to managers and executives of the massive corporations that have pushed for them, while doing almost nothing to create new, secure, well-paying jobs. The expansion of the CSG industry will line the pockets of executives and shareholders with public funding, tax write-offs, and the huge profits that will be made from exporting LNG overseas. At the same time, the federal government has continued to erode worker rights and union protections, seeking to remove the "better off overall test" and cut rates and conditions. It is clear who is getting a better deal from this 'recovery'.

This is not a new issue, but a rerun of past battles. The expansion of fossil fuels has repeatedly been forced through by state and federal governments, while mass movements calling for genuine climate action and a worker-led transition to publicly owned renewable energy have been stifled and controlled. This is because the government is beholden to the interests of the coal, oil, and gas companies which fund both major parties, and continues to play its role in the maintenance of class divisions by shifting the cost of the crisis onto the working class and pitting workers' interests against environmental justice and climate action. It is time workers, including Indigenous peoples, students, and climate activists, cut through this narrative and work together to fight for a just transition to renewable energy ourselves. Just as we cannot rely on private corporations and capitalists to solve the climate crisis, nor can we rely on the state to win it for us, as it is clear our governments, across jurisdictions and party lines, have no interest in the future of ordinary people.

What we need for the climate movement to be successful is widespread industrial action, and an alignment of social forces behind strong worker-oriented demands for climate action and a just transition, which must necessarily culminate in a general strike. The urgency of the climate crisis is such that we cannot continue to fight against every new fossil fuel project as it arises, and we cannot allow the state and private interests to dictate the terms of our struggle. We must be proactive in shaping our own future, as workers and communities organised democratically from the bottom-up, in order to achieve justice through climate action. This means building strong political consensus around radical demands, which drag broad institutions along behind active grassroots, rank and file movements of workers and ordinary people. We cannot appeal to authority and institutions like bureaucratic union leadership to do our work

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for us; we must organise from the bottom up in our industries, universities and workplaces to win the argument for a just transition, and mobilise people to fight for it.

To grow our power we must better connect the climate and labour movements. The climate movement will be inevitably reformist if run by NGOs and thinktanks who have little stake in provoking necessary radical changes; similarly, the labour movement can be limited in its vision for change without the urgency brought by the climate movement. If we are to identify and challenge the core causes of the climate crisis, links must be made between the exploitation of workers and the exploitation of ecosystems and the environment. It is apparent that capitalism is their common cause, and without decisive action from a clear revolutionary libertarian socialist perspective we will have little power to challenge it.

Single-issue campaigns have little hope of success without the strength and support of the working class - each struggle is interdependent, and we must weave our efforts together. This is why Indigenous leadership and solidarity with First Nations struggles must be core to any mass climate movement, it'is why democratic organising is vital, it's why we must unite the climate movement under a radical vision of eco-socialist change.

Through united struggle we can fight against corporate handouts and privatisation, and for more worker control over workplaces and industries, for a properly funded public sector, for publicly owned renewable energy, a just transition for workers in the fossil fuel industry, and the direct control of Indigenous people over their lands and water. Together we can fight against this 'gas led recovery plan', which is no true recovery at all, and win a better world for all.

What is Mutiny?

Mutiny is a monthly, worker run newsletter published by Black Flag Sydney. The primary purpose of this newsletter is to encourage the growth of social and political movements against exploitation and oppression by providing anarcho-communist perspectives and analysis on contemporary political events in Sydney. This is guided by our belief that it's only the working class itself — their organisation and power — that can fundamentally change society, and topple the domination of the rich and government officials that working class people have faced for hundreds of years.

Our ultimate goal is to build a society free of states, classes, currency, in order to achieve collective self-emancipation and universal freedom for all. The means we use to build this society will determine what it looks like, so we believe this world will not be built through 'state socialism', where an organised minority seizes power of the state to implement 'pro-worker' reforms, or a parliamentary road, where a political party attempts to win control of the state through elections. Instead, it will require a social revolution using the united power of the working class in the form of the general strike — organised by and for workers. This is because liberation for all cannot be won through the actions of a few. Therefore we must build the seeds of a better society today, by building rank-and-file power in our unions, by building social movements which take power away from the ruling class, so that we may one day have the social and politica organisation required to topple the state and capitalism.

We encourage you to share the ideas and words in this paper, and to build struggle wherever you are.

Black Flag Sydney

Mutiny is published by Black Flag Sydney, an anarcho-communist organisation in Sydney. We aim to build the power of working class movements against capitalism, and to provide an analysis of capitalism and the state that grows the force of revolutionary anarchist ideas in Sydney, with the goal of stateless communism. We acknowledge that we operate on is unceded Aboriginal land, and that the struggle for First Nation's sovereignty is the struggle for the liberation of the entire working class.

Upcoming Events

Our sister group, Sydney Anarcho-Communists, runs an open fortnightly reading group on Wednesday's at 6pm, at 6 Gerald St Marrickville - for all those interested in discussing and learning about anarchist and communist ideas.

For any enquiries about this newsletter, please email contact@blackflagsydney.com

Sydney Anarcho-Communists

sydneyancoms@gmail.com

24th Feburary	Unemployment Struggles
10th March	Australia & Imperialism in the Pacific
24th March	Anarchism and Education